

# USDA Announces Artificial Christmas Tree Recall

## *Inspectors Find Asian Beetle in Some Lots*

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) officials today announced a national recall of an artificial Christmas tree product imported from China. Michigan Department of Agriculture inspectors found that some of the seasonal items were infested with *Callidiellum villosulum*, also known as the Brown Fir Longhorned Beetle, a round-headed wood borer. More than 20 retailers nationwide received the decorative holiday items from Polytree Hong Kong Co. Ltd., a China-based manufacturer.

APHIS officials consider this beetle a significant quarantine pest of concern because it does not exist in the United States, it attacks live trees, and although its economic impact is unknown, damage could be significant. According to inspectors, the beetle hitchhiked in the trunks of the trees, which are made of unprocessed wood.

As part of the recall, APHIS has requested retailers pull Polytree artificial Christmas trees with natural wood trunks from shelves and return those items to a regional distribution center.

APHIS officials are urging consumers to return infested Polytree-brand trees to the stores where they were purchased. If live or dead insects or larvae are found, consumers can also contact their local agricultural cooperative extension service specialist. Placing the insects or larvae in plastic sandwich bags and freezing them is the proper method of containment until the specimens can be given to agriculture officials.

The beetle was first detected by a Saginaw, Mich., homeowner who alerted the Michigan Department of Agriculture. The insect has since been reported in products at other Michigan locations and in Illinois.

The Plant Protection Act gives USDA the authority to detect, control, eradicate, suppress, prevent, or retard the spread of plant pests or noxious weeds for the protection of agriculture, the environment and economy of the United States. For more information on this recall, call the APHIS toll-free information line at 1-888-703-4457.

**Note to Stakeholders:** Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>. For additional information on this topic, contact Claude Knighten at (301) 734-5271 or [clauder.knighten@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:clauder.knighten@aphis.usda.gov).

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